

Convoy to Calais

8.30am Saturday 18 June Central London
STANDUPTORACISM.ORG.UK

Dave Sewell reports on the growing revolt in France >>Pages 4&5

French resistance could bring down government

Socialist Worker

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700 PEOPLE DROWNED IN A WEEK



A RESCUER holds a drowned baby off the Libyan coast last week
PICTURE: PA

RACIST LAWS KILL REFUGEES

OPEN THE BORDERS

HIGHER EDUCATION
Escalating strikes can defend our universities

A TWO-DAY lecturers' strike last week was the opening shot in a fight against low pay and inequality. It came before the UCU lecturers' union conference this week.

Delegates were set to discuss escalating their action and coordinating future walkouts with other unions.

>>Pages 7&18

SYRIA



'Continuing the tradition of the revolution'

SYRIAN REFUGEES face repression and danger but are fighting back.

Two refugees told Socialist Worker that facing up to the counter-revolution in Syria showed them how to resist. One said Syrians in Turkey are organising "to try and perpetuate the democratic tradition of the Syrian revolution".

>>Pages 10&11

THE LABOUR PARTY
1966—seafarers' hope betrayed by Labour

THE 1966 seafarers' strike was a key test for the left wing rhetoric of Harold Wilson's Labour government—a test it failed by attacking workers.

Seafarers struck to demand better working hours and pay. But the Wilson government sided with the bosses.

>>Pages 14&15



THE THINGS THEY SAY

'I spend 80 percent of my time on unpaid work'

Tony Blair has no money

'We just don't know'

David Cameron leads a chant—yes a chant—at a Remain rally on Monday

'I think it is quite wrong to punish children for decisions taken by their parents'

Lord Waldergrave former minister and provost of Eton College threatens to resign from the Tory party at suggestions people from posho schools shouldn't get the best jobs

'A very serious issue with serious consequences'

Lib Dem peer Lord Paddick flew from New York to make a four-minute speech and flew out the same day. The final cost to us was £8,897.84—equivalent to nearly £20 a word or £2,224 a minute

'All we have to do is catch the prime minister with a live boy or a dead girl and we are away'

Tory MP on the plans to oust David Cameron



Blackmail and expenses scandals hit toxic Tories

THE TORY expenses scandal keeps ticking. So police have been given extra time to investigate a range of election fraud allegations against Tory MPs.

And the inquest into the death of Elliott Johnson, who killed himself after alleged bullying in the Tory party, was set to begin this week.

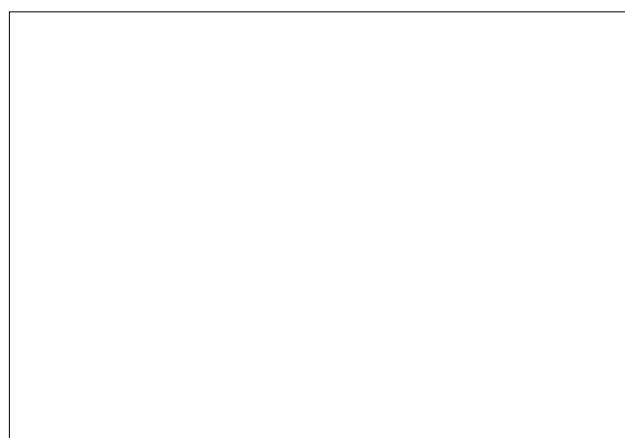
That case raises many things. Not least, Tory activist Mark Clarke has been accused of bullying, blackmailing and sexually assaulting fellow activists.

Elliott Johnson had accused him of bullying.

Then there is Robert Halfon.

Bear with Troublemaker a moment. Robert Halfon is a Tory minister who faced an alleged sex blackmail plot.

Halfon admitted to an affair after being told that



MARK CLARKE and a Tory bus

Sam Armstrong, acting on Clarke's behalf, intended to film him and his lover.

Sam Armstrong is still employed as an adviser by South Thanet MP Craig Mackinlay.

Conservative chairman

Lord Feldman is under some pressure over what he knew when about the scandal.

Feldman has rejected Halfon's plea to sack Armstrong.

Though Armstrong was banned from last year's Tory

conference, along with Clarke.

To add to the mix Mackinlay's South Thanet constituency is involved in the election expenses controversy.

The party is accused of failing to declare thousands of pounds spent in key seats.

Some of the claims relate to the way activists toured the country in buses and stayed in hotels.

None of this found its way into the declarations of local expenses. The buses were organised by Mark Clarke and a lot of time was spent in Thanet.

Tories also paid at least one unemployed woman to pose as a party supporter and help their general election campaign in South Thanet.

She denied being a Tory and said she saw a job advert at the job centre and was put on the bus and given a rosette.

EVERYTHING CAN be made into a commodity in the end. Hillsborough branded clothing—including underwear—is available on Amazon.

A women's pink thong with "96" and a portrait of the faces of the victims is available.

There are also beer glasses, mugs, sweatpants, shorts, caps and t-shirts all brandishing "96".



The more tasteful options

KWOTUAH Walenkaki, whose daughter died while playing in an east London park, has said it's "disgraceful" she has been denied legal aid for the inquest. The reason given is that it's not in the public interest. Alexia Walenkaki, five, was playing on a rope swing in Mile End Park when a tree trunk holding the swing fell on her.

Tax haven firms look to buy up Land Registry

ALL BIDDERS to snaffle up the government sale of the Land Registry have links to tax havens.

Two US private equity firms and a Canadian pension fund with business links to tax havens or secretive jurisdictions are among the venture capital businesses making bids.

The Land Registry database collects information on every house sale in England and Wales and is valued at more than £1.2 billion.

The companies are Omers, the Canadian pension giant, and Advent International and Hellman & Friedman, American private equity firms.

Omers would bid



Land grab?

through a division that has a linked company in Delaware.

Advent has a British division whose parent company is based in Boston, Massachusetts, but is incorporated in Delaware. One of the officers for H&F's British division is listed at Companies House as H&F Europe Holdings, which is registered in Delaware.

Did cops know about Birmingham bomb?

A "SIGNIFICANT" piece of information has been sent to the coroner who is considering reopening the Birmingham pub bombings inquests.

Senior coroner Louise Hunt said she received "sensitive information" from an undisclosed source.

Hunt added that it related to an allegation the security services had some advanced notice of the 1974 bombings.

Lawyers for the families of the 21 people killed in 1974 have already alleged the security services may have had prior knowledge of the attacks.



Paddy Hill

Paddy Hill, one of the "Birmingham Six" men wrongly jailed for the crime after being tortured into confessing, said, "There was a mole."

"I am also quite sure that the Birmingham Police had information before the bombs went off."

Documents relating to the case have been sealed until 2069.

Poshos' pound shop in Mayfair

A NEW shop offering bargains to billionaires is set to open in London's Mayfair.

The luxury discount store will open in August in a secret location (yawn).

It will offer every single item on sale for an eye-watering £1,000.

David Shapiro told the Daily Mail newspaper, "I think we are more accessible to the general population than many of the other retailers in Mayfair.

"There are many shops in Mayfair where you can't buy anything under £10,000, or £100,000 or £1 million.

"As far as Mayfair goes, we are definitely one of the cheapest stores. If people really want something they will save up to buy it."



ALL RISE

£14.2 BN

Amount landlords raked in last year. That is up almost a £1 billion on the previous year

Syrian Scots detention

GLASGOW POLICE, who "unlawfully" arrested three brothers campaigning against war in Syria, have seen their case dismissed in court due to "unreliable" evidence.

Three years ago, Police Scotland made the arrests on Buchanan Street, Glasgow.

Last Thursday a Glasgow Sheriff Court judge threw out the police claims as "unreliable".

Film evidence played a crucial part in proving the innocence of the campaigners.

The judge stated he was "astonished" after watching the video evidence from the scene.

As the detention was "unlawful", the three men had committed no crime by resisting arrest.

Without the amateur footage, a "serious miscarriage of justice" may have occurred—the judge added.

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Fresh clampdown forces refugees to risk own lives

by DAVE SEWELL

BORDER CONTROLS are driving more desperate people to risk their lives at sea. Dozens of migrants tried to reach Britain by boat last week—and the worst mass drownings in a year took place in the Mediterranean.

A group of 20 people—18 Albanians, including two children, and two British people—were rescued off the Kent coast last Saturday night. Their inflatable boat had started to sink.

They were detained by the border force at Dover. A Home Office spokesperson told Socialist Worker, “Immigration enforcement will check their documentation, and if they have entered illegally we would seek to remove them as quickly as possible.”

He also pointed out that the new Immigration Act has granted the border force extra powers to stop, board, divert or detain boats officials suspect of carrying migrants.

Another 17 Albanians were arrested last week after arriving on a catamaran boat in West Sussex.

Nine people face trial after police in the Netherlands intercepted a boat of 26 people with a map suggesting they would sail to Norfolk last year. They were mostly Vietnamese and Albanian.

Asylum

Many of those seeking asylum in Britain are from Albania, yet only one in seven are granted it. Home Office guidance recognises they may be in danger in Albania—but suggests they simply move to a different part of the small country.

The right wing media stoked panic about an “invasion”.

Damian Collins, Tory MP for Folkestone and Hythe, pledged an even tougher crackdown on borders—supposedly to save lives.

“It is incredibly dangerous and there is every likelihood that people will lose



The UN Refugee Agency estimate of sea arrivals to Italy last Saturday

their lives,” he said.

“We need to send a clear message that if people do try to come to Britain in this way they will be detected and returned... and that we will take firm action against those who assist them.”

But no one puts their life into the

BORDER LOCKDOWN forces people across the Mediterranean Sea

hands of a flimsy boat or unscrupulous traffickers if they have an alternative.

Each time one migration route is cut off it pushes people to more dangerous routes.

An Afghan refugee aged 25 was killed after being run over by a lorry on the motorway in Calais in the early hours of last Saturday morning. It's at least the sixth death at Britain's border in 2016 alone.

He was killed fleeing the chaos left by Britain and its allies' war—and forced by Britain's border controls to risk his life by trying to jump aboard a lorry.

The situation in the Mediterranean is even worse.

People continue to die crossing the Aegean Sea from Turkey to Greece.

But the European Union (EU) and

Nato clampdown there has driven more people to the longer and more dangerous crossing from Libya to Italy.

Based on survivor reports from three shipwrecks there last week, the United Nations estimated 700 people had drowned. The charity Doctors Without Borders estimated 900.

Around 14,000 people were rescued on the crossing from Libya in the busiest—and deadliest—week for over a year.

The clampdown is getting worse. The 8,000 refugees evacuated from the Idomeni camp in northern Greece last week have now been crammed into unventilated warehouses.

The only way to stop the carnage is to open the borders and grant safe passage—something the Tories and the EU are determined to avoid.

CALAIS

‘We'll show what Tories are doing’

ANTI-RACISTS across Britain are building for a convoy to Calais on Saturday 18 June to stand in solidarity with refugees there. Nearly 200 vehicles are already registered to take part.

Up to 6,000 people are stuck in appalling conditions in Calais.

The Stand Up to Racism (SUTR) group in Norwich is planning a minibus.

Norwich SUTR activist Julie Bremner told Socialist Worker, “Norfolk County Council has said it refuses to take in any of the few refugees David Cameron has agreed can come to Britain.”

SUTR supporters lobbied a meeting of Norfolk County Council on Tuesday.

Panic

“There's an attempt to stir up panic about the people coming across in boats,” said Julie. “We have to turn that around and say we need to help those people.”

Around 50 workers and students from the Social Work Action Network were set to go to Calais on Sunday as part of an international initiative.

Organiser Michael Lavallette told Socialist Worker, “We plan to talk to the refugees and get some real life stories to show the effect of what the Tories are doing. And we'll work with the organisations that are helping refugees there and need support.

“Many more people wanted to go than we were able to take, so we're telling all other social workers who wanted to come to join the 18 June convoy instead.”

Go to standuptoracism.org.uk

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The French resistance that could take down a government

by DAVE SEWELL

BACK STORY

A WAVE of strikes and protests to defend workers' rights is causing a crisis for France's Labour-type government. President Francois Hollande's proposed Work Law increases working hours and gives bosses more power to sack workers.

Oil refinery workers have walked out against the law. Only violent police attacks on roadblocks outside fuel depots last week partially defused a severe petrol shortage.

The government is depleting its strategic reserves in an attempt to weaken the strike. But the majority of oil refineries remain on strike.

Bosses at the oil import terminal in Le Havre tried to release supplies for airports on the orders of prime minister Manuel Valls last Friday. So workers walked out there too.

CGT union rep Fabian Bourdoulois said, "Since they opened the valves, we pulled all our members out on strike."

"They're not exactly going to restart the economy with what's left in those tanks."

Nuclear

Nuclear workers at the Nogent-sur-Seine are also hitting bosses hard. The plant functioned at less than half capacity, with production down by over 1,000 megawatts.

CGT rep Olivier Michard said, "We didn't quite know what mood the police would be in, so we came in early to set up our barricades in peace."

Meanwhile, thousands of workers stormed into the departure hall of Marseille's airport. It was part of a day of protest in solidarity with Air France workers.

Five Air France workers are on trial accused of violence towards bosses. Bosses had their shirts



Feeling the heat—prime minister
Manuel Valls

The French government's Work Law has been met by resistance

- The Work Law would make workers work longer hours and gives bosses more power to sack workers
- It would allow bosses to undermine national union agreements
- But powerful sections of workers are shutting down the economy in protest at the law
- This is causing a political crisis for the Labour-type government

WORKERS MARCH on the town hall in the port town of Le Havre last week

Workers demonstrate that they've got power to take on capitalism

THE FRENCH strikes have demonstrated how workers keep capitalism running—and how they can shut it down.

Last Thursday was the eighth day of nationwide mobilisations in the two-month revolt. More than 300,000 people marched.

Only one newspaper was in the shops—the left wing *'l'Humanité'*.

Workers refused to print any of the others after media bosses refused to publish a letter by CGT union leader Philippe Martinez.

The government has laid into the unions as a "minority" holding the country "hostage".

But the CGT alone has far more members than all the major parties put together. Polls repeatedly show a majority of people blame the government for the disruption and want it to withdraw the law.

It has tried to draw union leaders into talks because its only hope lies in getting them to back off from intensifying the resistance.

The revolt against the Work Law has also inspired more



Strikers blockade the road in Besançon in eastern France

PICTURE: FORCE OUVRIERE

workers to come out over their own demands.

Tax workers struck against office closures.

Peugeot car factory workers struck against an attack on their conditions and Amazon workers besieged their warehouses for better pay.

The energy and fuel shortages forced many businesses to scale down their operations.

Protesters banged on the windows of the studio and interrupted filming.

turnout in the audience of the French open tennis tournament.

President Francois Hollande was forced to insist that the movement was not a repeat of the general strike in May 1968.

Employment minister Myriam El Khomri, who is promoting the new law, had to abandon a TV interview.

The strikes even led to a lower

How the Work Law would eliminate crucial rights

THE French government's proposed Work Law blows a hole in workers' hard-won rights. It's a bosses' charter for cheaper layoffs, longer hours and lower wages.

Firms could lay off workers they no longer see as profitable. All firms will be able to start restructuring programmes currently restricted to those firms in financial crisis.

The law's central measure is Article 2.

It allows workplace agreements to undercut national or sector-wide agreements.

This effectively ends national bargaining and allows a race to the bottom.

Bosses long to roll back French workers' rights. The European Union's leadership recently issued recommendations encouraging the

French government in its attack.

The government has demobilised some sectors of resistance by offering concessions.

This has also given others more incentive to fight, and pushed the powerful bosses' union and hypocritical Tory opposition to come out against the law.

Between this and a

backbench rebellion, the government lost parliamentary support for its reform. It has used a part of the French constitution which allows it to suspend parliamentary debate.

But this further inflamed anger and gave the movement new life. It raises the possibility of a vote of no confidence toppling the government.



President Francois Hollande and employment minister Myriam El Khomri

Socialist Worker WHAT WE THINK

THE EUROPEAN UNION IS A BOSSSES' CLUB...

TWO VISIONS of European unity are starkly on show this week.

On one side are the bosses and politicians seeking to frighten and bamboozle people into voting to remain in the European Union (EU).

The bosses' Confederation of British Industry and the governor of the Bank of England Mark Carney have openly backed the Remain campaign.

Their allies in the European Round Table of Industrialists, the International Monetary Fund and the White House are all for Remain.

Profit

This is the internationalism of profit-making. As their records show, they push globalisation for the needs of the rich.

Bankers' institutions, which push policies that have wrecked whole economies, have the gall to lecture us about the dangers of leaving the EU.

On the other side there are the French workers sending a clear message across a continent—we have the power to fight back.

Whatever happens in France, it's

clear that changes to the working class during the last 30 years have not eliminated the potential for successful resistance.

Strikes can still be powerful—workers can bring the capitalist economy to the halt.

The indefinite rail strike in Belgium and the strikes in Greece are further signs that should cheer workers everywhere.

They will be hated by bosses, whichever side they take in the referendum.

The unity we want to see is based on international solidarity with workers fighting back across the world.

Workers' internationalism is the polar opposite of the unity of the

A Leave vote would deal a savage blow to the bosses' European Union

EU bosses' club, which bolsters imperialism and leaves refugees to die at the borders of Fortress Europe.

"Our people" are not the rich and powerful of Britain or any other country.

"Our people" are workers in Europe and anywhere else in the world.

A victory against the bosses' Work Law in France would be our victory too.

Savage

A Leave vote in the EU referendum would deal a savage blow to the bosses' Europe, but it would not weaken the international links between workers in struggle.

The EU has done nothing to protect the rights of refugees or workers against the attacks of the bosses and the state.

It is resistance that will defend the rights we've won through struggle, not the EU.

That was true in the past and it is still true today.

Socialists should argue to break with the EU and organise as strongly as possible for workers to link up their struggles against the bosses of Europe.

It is an illusion to think that such an institution will back anti-capitalist measures.

EU institutions, such as the European Commission and European Central Bank, are made up of unelected bureaucrats.

The European Parliament has limited powers and is largely ignored.

Rights for workers and refugees won't come through pinning our hopes on reforming the EU.

They will come through challenging it.

THE EUROPEAN Union (EU) imposes austerity that trashes workers' lives. It upholds racist laws that condemn refugees to drown in the sea.

Some left supporters of the EU say it can be reformed.

In reality, it is a thoroughly capitalist institution designed to protect the rich.

Its forerunner, the European Economic Community, was set up by Western European ruling classes to make it easier for

Fundamental change requires all 28 member states to agree.

bosses to compete. The EU has continued this role.

It gives multinational firms access to much bigger markets and workforces.

The EU is the largest economic bloc in the world.

Privatisation

EU laws enshrine bosses' "freedom" to set up businesses, move capital and push privatisation and "free trade".

Fundamental change requires all 28 member states to agree.

SOCIALIST REVIEW

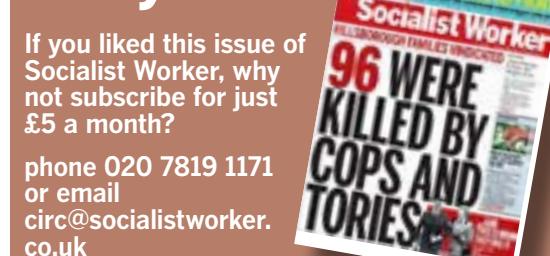
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ANALYSIS

ALEX CALLINICOS



Crises force cracks in neoliberal agenda

IS THE Pope still a Catholic? This is the question provoked by a new article by three International Monetary Fund (IMF) economists—Jonathan Ostry, Prakash Loungani, and Davide Furceri—headlined “Neoliberalism—Oversold?”

During the 1980s and 1990s the IMF, alongside the World Bank, was one of the main engines for the internationalisation of a neoliberal economic agenda.

This agenda was pioneered by the Chilean military junta, Margaret Thatcher in Britain and Ronald Reagan in the US.

Strongly backed by the US, they used first the Third World debt crisis and then the collapse of the Soviet Union to force states to adopt free market policies.

This meant opening up to foreign trade and investment, cutting government spending, and privatising state industries and public services.

Now Ostry, Loungani, and Furceri call for “a more nuanced view of what the neoliberal agenda is likely to be able to achieve”. The Financial Times newspaper complained, “Even the use of the term ‘neoliberalism’ is provocative.”

“It is normally used by critics of the free market economics advocated by Friedrich Hayek and Milton Friedman. A more common usage would be that of this week’s Socialist Worker newspaper: ‘The IMF uses debt as a weapon to force vicious neoliberal reforms onto elected governments.’”

But the IMF economists aren’t calling for neoliberalism to be dumped altogether. They focus on “the effects of two policies: removing restrictions on the movement of capital across a country’s borders (so-called capital account liberalisation); and fiscal consolidation, sometimes called ‘austerity’, which is shorthand for policies to reduce fiscal deficits and debt levels.”

Behind this lie conflicts within the main capitalist classes provoked by the crises of the past two decades.

Free movement of capital has been under fire since the late 1990s. Then, countries such as South Korea found their economies devastated by massive outflows of speculative money. Ostry, Loungani, and Furceri concede that the neoliberal era has been one of financial boom and bust fed by inflows and outflows of capital.

Inequality

They also acknowledge that “in addition to raising the odds of a crash, financial openness has distributional effects, appreciably raising inequality.”

Their second thoughts about austerity reflect the intense debates provoked by the eurozone crisis. The IMF has forced many indebted states—for example, South Korea in the late 1990s—to implement massive cuts in public spending. Alongside the European Central Bank and the European Commission—the hated Troika—it imposed similar policies on Greece, Ireland, Portugal, and Spain after 2010.

They had terrible economic and social consequences.

But the IMF soon developed doubts about the neoliberal dogma that shrinking the public sector increases economic growth. Ostry, Loungani, and Furceri summarise research showing that “episodes of fiscal consolidation have been followed, on average, by drops rather than by expansions in output. On average, a consolidation of 1 percent of GDP increases the long-term unemployment rate by 0.6 percentage point and raises by 1.5 percent within five years the Gini measure of income inequality.”

These arguments are surely related to divisions that have developed within the Troika over Greece. During last summer’s confrontation between the European Union and Greece the IMF argued that Greece could never repay its foreign debt and should be given relief.

German finance minister Wolfgang Schäuble has strongly resisted this argument. He fears that if Greece receives debt relief, this will weaken the pressure on all EU member states to continue implementing neoliberal “reforms”.

Last week’s deal to release some of the funds promised last July to keep Greece afloat postponed a decision on debt relief till after next year’s German elections.

The IMF’s partial retreat from full-on neoliberalism is a sign of the pressure the dominant ideological consensus has come under thanks to the global economic crisis.

But to break this consensus will need more struggles like those we see in France today.

Solidarity for Wales strikers as museum bosses get nasty

Workers in Wales have received huge support—and more solidarity can help them to win, writes Nick Clark

BOSSES AT National Museum Wales are using dirty tricks to undermine an all-out strike and delay a decision that could end the dispute.

Workers have been on strike for more than four weeks. They have had as much as £1,000 more than they were expecting docked from their pay since beginning their indefinite action.

PCS union branch secretary and striking gallery assistant Hannah Lawson told Socialist Worker she was “disappointed” that bosses took the extra money “without warning.”

She said, “Management have changed the date of our pay rate cut-off from its usual date by about a week.

“Most strikers have lost a week’s pay—but some have had £1,000 deducted.”

The loss in strike pay comes as museum trustees have dragged out the strike.

Workers from museum sites across Wales walked out on 28 April after more than two years fighting plans to scrap their weekend premiums.

Plans

These plans could see some low paid workers lose as much as £3,000 a year.

The strike looked as if it could be nearing an end after Welsh economy minister Ken Skates intervened two weeks ago.

A deal was brokered which



PICTURE: SOCIALIST WORKER

STRIKERS AND supporters at PCS conference (above) but has minister Ken Skates (left) brokered a deal?

Strikers were boosted by the huge solidarity and standing ovations they received at visits to PCS and Wales TUC conferences last week.

Hannah spoke to the PCS conference in Brighton. She said solidarity from PCS branches and elsewhere “has really strengthened us and given us the morale to keep going”.

Strikers collected more than £800 for the strike fund in Brighton. And they have raised well over £10,000 from collections and solidarity visits across Britain.

But after the latest attack on pay, and with bosses stalling, the solidarity must keep coming.

Museum workers in Scotland were set to hold a

solidarity fundraiser for the strikers following their own victory over a similar pay attack earlier this year.

And supporters in London plan a fundraising event on Friday of next week—while those in Swansea plan one next Wednesday.

Everyone can do something to help the strikers keep going—and score a victory over bullying bosses.

Donate to the strike fund: Bank: Unity Trust Bank Account name: PCS Amgueddfa Cymru 107006 Branch Hardship Fund Account number: 20364700 Sort code: 60-83-01.

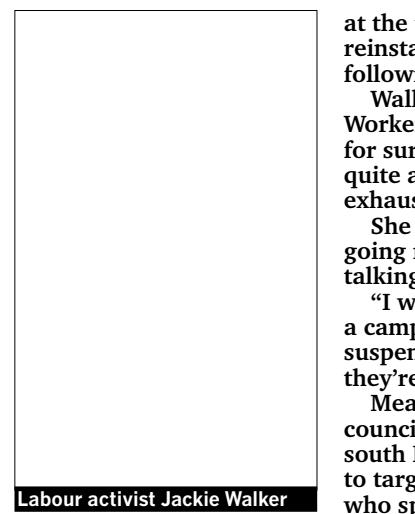
Or donate online at bit.ly/26eNhvq. Invite a striker to speak at your branch. Email branch secretary Peter Hill at dennishill20@hotmail.com

Labour lifts a suspension, but plots in Lambeth

LABOUR PARTY activist and Momentum vice chair Jackie Walker has been readmitted to the party. She had been suspended after claims of antisemitism.

Walker was suspended last month after comments she made in a Facebook conversation in February were published in the Jewish Chronicle newspaper. She compared the Holocaust to the African slave trade.

Her suspension was part of a wider attempt to smear the Labour left as antisemitic, as Socialist Worker reported



at the time. But she was reinstated last week following an investigation.

Walker told Socialist Worker, “I feel vindicated for sure. But I’m also quite angry and quite exhausted.”

She added, “I’m still going round the country talking to different groups.

“I want to get together a campaign against the suspensions and the way they’re happening.”

Meanwhile Labour councillors in Lambeth, south London, are set to target a councillor who spoke out against

library closures and other Lambeth Labour policies. Socialist Worker understands that Labour councillor Rachel Heywood was set to be disciplined on Wednesday.

She could be suspended from the Labour group at Lambeth council. Library campaigners were set to rally outside the group’s meeting on Wednesday. Many Labour members want party leader Jeremy Corbyn to back Heywood.

Join the protest—Wednesday 1 June, 7pm, International House, Canterbury Crescent, SW9 7QE

Escalating strikes can defend our universities

A two-day lecturers' strike signalled the opening shot against low pay and inequality, reports **Sadie Robinson**

SOME 60,000 university workers held a two-day strike across Britain on Wednesday and Thursday of last week to challenge low pay and inequality.

The UCU union members have suffered a real terms pay cut of 14.5 percent since 2009, but face a miserly 1.1 percent pay offer.

They want more—and an end to pay inequality for women and casualised workers.

Strikers said zero hours and fixed term contracts are becoming the norm in some universities.

Sarah, who is on a casual contract at Queen Mary's University in London, told Socialist Worker, "Almost 50 percent of the teaching staff there are on casual contracts.

"There's serious job insecurity, it becomes very difficult to plan your life."

Casual

She explained that workers could be trapped on casual contracts "for years".

Christina Paine, a lecturer at London Metropolitan University, has been on a zero hours contract for 12 years.

She told a 150-strong rally at the bosses' offices in London, "I don't know if I'll be working from one year to the next."

Ioanna Ioannou is a researcher on a fixed term contract at University College London (UCL). She told Socialist Worker, "I feel poor all the time. I don't feel secure enough to plan my life."

Women and workers from ethnic minorities are more likely to be on casualised contracts and more likely to suffer from cuts.

This is one reason why London Met student Jenny Nash backed the strike. She told Socialist Worker, "We've had technicians made redundant. Most or all of them have been black or ethnic minority."

"There's an obvious pattern with who's more likely to be on casual contracts."

Now London Met bosses want to make leading union reps

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redundant—and replace their roles with workers on casual contracts.

There's plenty of money to pay workers more and give every worker a permanent contract.

As UCL striker Colin Byelong put it, "Those at the top, the vice chancellors, are getting big pay rises. But our pay has eroded so much it's hard to pay the bills."

Strikers know the real reason for attacks on their conditions isn't lack of money—it's a bigger agenda to let the market rip through higher education.

Stripping

Institute of Education programmer John Johnson said bosses were "asset stripping" the London university.

He said, "It's all about the bottom line—not about the students."

If the Tories' higher education white paper goes through it will mean more competition, cuts and privatisation.

That's why many students, trade unionists and other campaigners supported last week's strikes.

As Barbara, a student union rep at London Met, put it, "This dispute is about our education."

More online...

A white paper to cash in on universities >>bit.ly/24b47aQ



UNIVERSITY OF Leeds workers demand an end to zero hours contracts

PICTURE: NEIL TERRY

Lecturers debate strategy to take on bosses' attacks on higher education

WORKERS ON many picket lines debated where next for their fight ahead of their union UCU's annual congress in Liverpool this week.

Delegates will discuss escalating their action and coordinating future walkouts with workers in other unions (see page 18).

The UCU has asked branches to consider a strike day in June or July.

It is also preparing for an England-wide strike on 18 August, when A Level results are released, and action short of a strike.

Impact

Lesley McGorrigan, UCU campaigns officer at Leeds University, said workers there supported holding a strike on an open day.

She said, "It would have a big impact if lots of parents and prospective students visited the university and found picket lines."

"I think we should also go for an assessment boycott in the autumn."

University College London (UCL) UCU branch secretary Tony Brown said, "We also have

to defend workers if employers deduct pay for action short of a strike."

"On paper our response is a national strike—but it needs to be made into reality."

Many strikers said the action must be the start of a serious campaign.

Rebecca Lewis, UCU vice president at City University London, said, "I'd certainly support more strikes."

"It's the only thing the management listens to."

UCL researcher Ioanna added, "We need sustained action involving more strikes. We need to escalate."

Shadow chancellor John McDonnell pledged "100 percent support" for the strikers. He told them, "I will support you all the way with this campaign."

University workers from other unions

visited picket lines and said they also wanted to strike.

Unison's higher education officer Donna Merriman-Rowe told a London rally that Unison would consult members on the pay deal.

"We hope we will be joining you in action," she said.

Many strikers reported that workers joined the union in the run-up to the walkout—and were on the picket lines.

Some 65 percent of workers voted for strikes in the ballot, despite some concerns about the union leadership's willingness to lead a serious fight.

There is potential for a big and angry campaign and the union must take a lead.

As Ioanna said, "Universities can afford to pay us more—we can win."



"We need to escalate" said Ioanna, researcher at UCL

Key US dispute may end at Verizon as unions claim victory

An indefinite strike at Verizon has made some gains—and has shown workers everywhere that it's possible to fight back, says **Charlie Kimber**

THE MOST high profile strike in the US for several years seemed to be over as Socialist Worker went to press. Union leaders have hailed major gains.

In a keynote battle, nearly 40,000 Verizon telecom workers have been on strike for over six weeks against outsourcing and attacks on pay and conditions.

There have been big pickets and bitter confrontations with scabs.

Every trade unionist and commentator is watching the outcome—and so are many bosses.

The US government's department of labour has been mediating between bosses and the unions.

At the end of last week US labour secretary Thomas Perez announced there was "an agreement in principle on a four-year contract".

He said the "parties are now working to reduce the agreement to writing".

The Communication Workers Association (CWA) is the biggest union in Verizon.

Contract

It said, "After 45 days of the largest strike in recent history, striking CWA members have achieved our major goals of improving working families' standard of living, creating good union jobs in our communities and achieving a first contract for wireless retail store workers."

Workers had not been given details of the offer at the start of this week.

Press reports say the company had retreated on plans to relocate workers for up to two months away from their home areas.

Sanders scares poll rivals

THE TWO candidates who are expected to contest the US presidency in November have refused to debate with Bernie Sanders. The self-proclaimed socialist is running to be the Democratic candidate.

Establishment candidate Hillary Clinton is the favourite to be the Democratic Party nominee. She refused to debate with Sanders in the run-up to the California Democratic Party primary contest on 7 June.

Republican Donald Trump then pulled out of a scheduled

BACK STORY

The walkout at Verizon was the biggest US strike since 2011

- Workers there began an indefinite strike in April
- They fought attacks including plans to force them to work away from home for weeks at a time
- Workers faced attacks on their pensions, health care and pay
- The union says their strike has won real gains for workers
- Some workers are angry that the union called off the action before details were discussed

A pay rise of nearly 11 percent over four years is well up on the 6.5 percent Verizon had offered.

Proposed pension cuts also seem to have gone.

But there are also reports that the company has won "hundreds of millions of dollars in health care cost savings"—which will hit workers hard.

Some strikers were angry that unions called for a return to work this week before workers had a chance to discuss the deal.

One CWA member told Socialist Worker, "It's been a great strike, and we weren't weakening.

"I don't like going back before we agree the contract, and I'm worried that there are rumours of big hikes in our medical costs.

"I hope it's a win because it will be a victory for every worker in the US, and can give many other people the feeling they can strike, win support, and get somewhere."

VERIZON WORKERS protesting during their indefinite strike

GREECE

Port workers lead resistance to stop sell-offs after new bailout blackmail

by DAVE SEWELL

WORKERS AT the Greek port of Piraeus near Athens struck for two days last week against privatisation.

Railway workers and Athens Metro workers struck for five hours on Thursday of last week. Bus workers are expected to coordinate with the next walkouts.

Some £40 billion of state assets are to be privatised. This is part of the bailout programme imposed on Greece by the European Union (EU) and International Monetary Fund (IMF).

These assets are part of an "independent" fund run by Greece's creditors—not its elected government.

The sell-offs come with attacks

routes into Europe for cargo from China.

The EU and IMF agreed to release the latest instalment of Greece's bailout last week, after the Greek parliament passed the fund and other measures.

Left party Syriza heads the Greek government.

It was already behind in paying its workers' wages before these latest attacks.

And payment deadlines in July mean the money will go straight back to the IMF and European Central Bank.

Meanwhile school workers and hospital workers across Greece plan to strike on Wednesday of next week over the effects of previous austerity packages.

They want more staff to fill the gaping holes left by cuts.

debate with Sanders.

Sanders says he represents an alternative to the corporate-driven politics that Clinton and Trump represent.

Clinton remains tainted. An official report last week criticised her use of a private email server while she was secretary of state.

A poll on 18 May showed that 55 percent want an independent candidate to run against Clinton and Trump. That includes 91 percent of voters under 29.

Syriza leader Alexis Tsipras

on trade unions' right to organise.

And they undervalue assets that bosses can then make a mint out of.

Piraeus and the railway linked to it are one of the most important

BHS bosses are all over the shop

PHILLIP GREEN is so greedy and selfish he epitomises everything that is wrong with capitalism and big business.

For years he has been stuffing his own pockets with profits while refusing to add more money to a pension fund for his workers.

As a result he has piled up hundreds of millions of pounds in debt for the business and lied to workers in the process.

All of this just reinforces how little bosses value workers.

I'm a retail worker. I stand for seven hours a day serving rude customers, for minimum wage with unpaid breaks in a uniform I had to pay for.

Yet people like Phillip Green do absolutely nothing and end up with all the money that me and thousands of others worked hard to make.

The fact that Green is getting away with what he is doing shows us how disorganised, chaotic, impractical and unfair capitalism is—and who it really benefits.

If ordinary people tried to steal millions while promising others money we would be locked up. But when the rich and powerful do it the "rule of law" is on their side.

For far too long the bosses have been demanding the maximum from workers while giving us the minimum in return. It's time for workers to take control and show the ruling class who really runs society.

Saba
West London



ILLUSTRATION: TIM SANDERS

Just a thought...

The title of Utopia is Greek

A MINOR point about your article on Thomas More's book *Utopia* (Socialist Worker, 11 May). The book was written in Latin, that is true. But the phrase used for the title, not a place, is in fact Greek.

John McPartlin
by email

Scottish left needs to unite

MOST OF the left groups in Scotland called for a Scottish National Party vote as a first vote. This resulted in a very poor showing for the radical left at the Scottish parliamentary elections.

The real division in Scottish politics is support for austerity policies. To say that it's support for independence, as many on the left do, lets the SNP off the hook.

Duncan Brown
Glasgow

French workers show the way

NICE TO see workers in France fighting effectively against right wing Labour policies.

Paulus
on Twitter

Don't EU like having rights?

I DO not feel leaving the European Union (EU) now would do anything other than hand the Tories more power.

The deal they tried to negotiate with the EU on workers' rights was shocking. Leaving the EU will only enable them to enact these laws.

It says a lot about our government that staying in the EU will help prevent bad policy.

Martin Phipps
on Facebook

Boris Johnson the hypocrite

BORIS JOHNSON has described the latest immigration figures as "scandalous".

On becoming mayor of London in 2008, he celebrated "the greatest, most cosmopolitan, multi-racial, generous-hearted city on Earth".

Now he is whipping up anti-immigrant racism on behalf of the Brexit campaign.

Sasha Simic
East London

Blacklisting bosses are only sorry that they were caught

SIMON BASKETTER'S article (Socialist Worker, 18 May) sums up how the forces of the state colluded with giant construction firms to attack the rights of workers.

Robert McAlpine's firm played a leading role in vetting workers.

We got documentary evidence that McAlpine was involved in vetting workers as long ago as 1974.

We occupied a Reinforced Steel Services factory in Greenwich, south London, in May 1977. The immediate cause of the occupation was the management sacking of our steel workers' union (ISTF).

We had refused to call off a strike in support of National Union of Public Employees' (NUPE) call for solidarity against the closure of

St Nicolas's hospital. We got tremendous support from hospital staff, steel workers and comrades.

The occupation lasted over three months. In the offices we found a vast amount of information for bosses on how to deal with troublemakers.

A letter dated 2 August 1974 from our boss to a Mr Keenan from Sir Robert McAlpine & Sons Ltd said, "I would like to take you up on your kind offer of vetting a small number of personnel for me."

"I attach a short list of names and hope you will let me have the outcome as soon as possible."

We found an answer in a letter to our manager dated 23 August 1974 from the McAlpine address, written on behalf of Mr Keenan. It said, "The

five people enumerated are 'clean' as far as they are aware".

This proves that McAlpine's firm was deeply involved in offering vetting services to any firm who requested it.

The long struggle for justice by the Blacklist Support Group forced the bosses to admit they did wrong.

Dave Smith, secretary of the Blacklist Support Group, was right when he said, "The only thing firms are sorry for is getting caught. This is not the end of the matter—this is unfinished business."

Let's hope that the struggle for the truth is soon won, as it was by the Justice for Hillsborough fighters.

Morgan O'Brien
South London

Fight for housing goes on to axe the new act

THE KILL the Housing Bill campaign is building towards its national demonstration on 18 June.

The Daily Mirror newspaper reported that "campaigners were forced to admit defeat".

But they didn't ask us and we have not given up.

The Lords delayed the government's plans but they are unelected post holders.

And the Tory government was elected by less than 25 percent of the electorate. Neither

can claim to be representative.

The campaign has been reborn as Axe the Housing Act, a decision made by a meeting in central London last Saturday.

The meeting reaffirmed our commitment to campaign for secure homes for all—and for rent controls. The next organising meeting will be on Saturday 4 June central London.

Graham
West London

I'M BETTING readers of Socialist Worker breathed a sigh of relief when the fascist Freedom Party lost in Austria's presidential election.

It had campaigned against immigrants and the European Union (EU).

Despite losing, the result was a tremendous boost to the European racist right.

If the fascists had won many of the best socialists and trade unionists would be demoralised.

A Leave victory in Britain will be celebrated by the right throughout Europe.

In other circumstances I

would vote to Leave—but I won't do so knowing that it will strengthen the right in Britain and give confidence to European racists.

It is not too late for Socialist Worker to call for a Remain vote.

Jim Nichol
North London

THE LEFT Leave (Lexit) campaign is an extremely positive development. It has separated the socialist arguments against the EU from right wing assaults on migrants and refugees.

It is therefore disappointing that in South

Wales George Galloway is speaking at Left Leave rallies.

It is right to have a broad range of speakers at such meetings. But Galloway has appeared on a platform with Ukip's Nigel Farage, and made concessions to right wing arguments against the EU.

The Socialist Workers Party was right to remove its speaker from meetings featuring Galloway. We hope Left Leave will continue to push back against the racism on both sides of the debate.

Joe Redmond
Cardiff

'WE ARE CONTINUING THE TRADITION OF THE SYRIAN REVOLUTION'

Syrian refugees face repression and danger but they are fighting back. Two refugees told Socialist Worker that facing up to the counter-revolution in Syria showed them how to resist

MILLIONS OF Syrians live as refugees facing danger and repression in neighbouring countries and across Europe.

But the counter-revolution of dictator Bashar al-Assad in Syria has taught them how to organise and resist. Many are experienced revolutionaries.

Mustafa, a barber and a member of the Syrian Revolutionary Left Current, escaped to Istanbul in Turkey earlier this year. He told Socialist Worker, "Most Syrian refugees in Turkey are struggling. Their main preoccupation is finding some work to feed and house themselves."

"Therefore political activity is relatively low. But this does not mean that they are non-political. A great many took part in the popular movement and participated in demonstrations against the regime."

Mustafa explained how some refugees are trying to build collectives, and hold public meetings and debates. He said they are organising "to try and perpetuate the democratic tradition of the Syrian revolution".

Former insurance worker and refugee Amjad is also trying to organise outside Syria.

He first joined protests in Syria in July 2011 after being freed from a regime jail (see box). Now he is one of a group of informal refugee leaders at the port of Piraeus in Greece.

"There are four of us—myself and my friends, one Iranian, one Afghan and one Kurd," he said. "We act as a sort of court when there are disagreements. We help as interpreters and coordinate volunteering. I help people learn English."

On the road to Europe

"And we talk to the authorities demanding homes, health care and education."

Amjad initially fled Syria and went to Turkey, but conditions there drove him to look elsewhere.

In Turkey refugees have to apply for an ID to be able to work or move around. Amjad said, "Every day the police just tell you to come back tomorrow."

"What they want is for you to give up, get back in touch with the people smugglers and get out of the country."

The desperate conditions refugees face make them more vulnerable to abuse from bosses.

"I got a job in a fish factory, working 16 hour days," said Amjad. "The boss offered to hold onto our wages and save them up for us, and I trusted him. But after two months he hadn't paid anything."

"We were watching the news and

"I complained and said I needed to feed my family. He said, 'Fuck off back to your country then'. I went to the police and they said the same."

Mustafa said, "There is no protection against abusive bosses."

"Many children are forced to work long hours instead of going to school."

"They have to provide for their families because their parents are not allowed to work due to their refugee status."

"At the same time, many wealthy Syrian merchants and capitalists were moved to Turkey. Entire factories were moved here from Aleppo. Those people lead a luxurious life while the majority of refugees struggle."

Mustafa said, "I never had any illusions in Western governments, but the EU's handling of the refugee crisis is shocking."

"It refuses to open its doors to people who are desperately fleeing a war, and would rather have them drown in the Mediterranean."

He said the deal "turned Syrian refugees into a bargaining chip".

"There is no concern for our fate, our dignity or our human rights," he said. "We know most of the money paid by the EU to Turkey will not benefit refugees."

Amjad took a boat to Greece when he decided to leave Turkey. He said, "I hadn't been planning to come to Europe."

"But when I saw the situation in Turkey I thought, what kind of future will this be for my son?"

"I paid the smugglers and they took us in a boat. But maybe a kilometre out the driver jumped into the water and was picked up by his friends. We were on our own."

Amjad hoped that getting to Greece would lead to a big change in his life. He quickly realised that it would not.

"When I saw the island I felt a sense of victory—now I could start building a new life for my family," he said.

"But when I got to Piraeus and saw all the people stuck there that feeling was gone with the wind."

"This was in March, and we knew the European Union (EU) was about to meet with Turkey."

"What happens if someone has a medical emergency?"

"The camps are hours away from the cities, someone could die before

the internet for a ray of hope. "But instead they broke us. The deal they made is unfair."

It means that any refugee arriving in Greece can be deported to Turkey. It allows refugees to be rounded up into detention centres.

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WHAT WE STAND FOR

These are the core politics of the Socialist Workers Party.

INDEPENDENT WORKING CLASS ACTION

Under capitalism workers' labour creates all profit. A socialist society can only be constructed when the working class seizes control of the means of production and democratically plans how they are used.

REVOLUTION NOT REFORM

The present system cannot be patched up or reformed as the established Labour and trade union leaders say.

It has to be overthrown. Capitalism systematically degrades the natural world. Ending environmental crisis means creating a new society.

THERE IS NO PARLIAMENTARY ROAD

The structures of the present parliament, army, police and judiciary cannot be taken over and used by the working class. They grew up under capitalism and are designed to protect the ruling class against the workers.

The working class needs an entirely different kind of state—a workers' state based upon councils of workers' delegates and a workers' militia.

At most parliamentary activity can be used to make propaganda against the present system.

Only the mass action of the workers themselves can destroy the system.

INTERNATIONALISM

The struggle for socialism is part of a worldwide struggle. We campaign for solidarity with workers in other countries.

We oppose everything which turns workers from one country against those from other countries.

We oppose racism and imperialism. We oppose all immigration controls.

We support the right of black people and other oppressed groups to organise their own defence. We support all genuine national liberation movements.

The experience of Russia demonstrates that a socialist revolution cannot survive in isolation in one country.

In Russia the result was state capitalism, not socialism. In Eastern Europe and China a similar system was later established by Stalinist parties. We support the struggle of workers in these countries against both private and state capitalism.

We are for real social, economic and political equality of women. We are for an end to all forms of discrimination against lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people.

We defend the right of believers to practise their religion without state interference.

THE REVOLUTIONARY PARTY

To achieve socialism the most militant sections of the working class have to be organised into a revolutionary socialist party.

Such a party can only be built by activity in the mass organisations of the working class.

We have to prove in practice to other workers that reformist leaders and reformist ideas are opposed to their own interests. We have to build a rank and file movement within the unions.

To join us, turn to page 16 or go to www.swp.org.uk or phone 020 7840 5602 for more information

{ SOCIALIST WORKER } PUBLIC MEETINGS

HUDDERSFIELD

The EU—a left case for exit
Wed 8 Jun, 6.30pm,
Brian Jackson House,
2 New North Parade (near
both train and bus stations),
HD1 5JP

LONDON: NORTHWEST

Racism, resistance and revolution
Thu 16 Jun, 7.30pm,
West London Trade Union Club,
33-35 High St, Acton, W3 6ND

MEDWAY

Racism, resistance and revolution
Thu 16 Jun, 7.30pm,
Nucleus Arts Centre (Conference Room),
272 High St, ME4 4BP

ROTHERHAM

Racism, resistance and revolution
Wed 15 Jun, 7pm,
Talbot Lane Methodist Church Centre,
Moorgate St, S60 2EY

TELFORD

Capitalism in crisis—was Marx right?
Thu 23 Jun, 7.30pm,
Carriages, The Parade,
Wellington, TF1 1PY

{ SOCIALIST WORKER } BRANCH MEETINGS

Weekly meetings to discuss political issues and our local interventions. All welcome.

BARNSLEY

Why does capitalism need borders?

Thu 9 Jun, 6.30pm,
YMCA, Blucher St, S70 1AP

BIRMINGHAM: CITY CENTRE

Antisemitism, Zionism, Labour and the left
Wed 8 Jun, 7pm,
Birmingham LGBT Centre,
38/40 Holloway Circus,
B1 1EQ

BOLTON

Mental health in crisis
Thu 9 Jun, 6.30pm,
Bolton Socialist Club,
16 Wood St (off
Bradshawgate), BL1 1DY

BRADFORD

Capitalism in crisis—was Marx right?
Thu 9 Jun, 7pm,
Glyde House,
Little Horton Lane (opposite
the ice rink), BD5 0BQ

BRIGHTON

The history of immigration controls in Britain
Thu 9 Jun, 7.30pm,
Friends Meeting House,
Ship St, BN1 1AF

BRISTOL

Why does capitalism need borders?
Wed 8 Jun, 7.30pm,
YHA, 14 Narrow Quay,
BS1 4QA

CARDIFF

The Spanish Civil War
Wed 15 Jun, 7.30pm,
Cathays Community Centre,
Cathays Terrace, CF24 4HX

CHELMSFORD

Is socialism possible?
Thu 16 Jun, 7.30pm,
Friends Meeting House,
Rainsford Rd, CM1 2QL

CHESTERFIELD

The politics of Brexit
Thu 9 Jun, 7.30pm,
Chesterfield Library,
New Beetwell St, S40 1QN

COLCHESTER

Do you need to be a revolutionary to win reforms?
Wed 8 Jun, 7.30pm,
The Odd One Out,
28 Mersea Rd, CO2 7ET

COVENTRY

Is opposing Israel antisemitic?
Wed 8 Jun, 7.30pm,
West Indian Centre,
159 Spon St, CV1 3BB

EDINBURGH

Trump, Sanders and the US working class
Wed 8 Jun, 7.30pm,
Friends Meeting House,
7 Victoria St, EH1 2JL

EXETER

EU—the left case for exit
Thu 9 Jun, 7pm,
Exeter Community Centre,
17 St Davids Hill, EX4 3RG

GLASGOW: SOUTH

Can Jeremy Corbyn survive as Labour leader?
Thu 9 Jun, 7.30pm,
Govanhill Baths, 99 Calder St,
G42 7RA

WHAT'S ON

SOCIALIST WORKER BRANCH MEETINGS



STRIKERS MARCHING in Paris on Thursday of last week

PICTURE: FORCE OUVRIERE

FRANCE

Workers and students vs the government

ABERDEEN

Thu 9 Jun, 6pm,
The Snug,
Ma Cameron's,
6-8 Little Belmont St,
AB10 1JG

BURNLEY

Wed 8 Jun, 7.30pm,
Red Triangle Cafe,
160 St James's St,
BB11 1NR

DONCASTER

Is there an alternative to capitalism?

Wed 8 Jun, 7.30pm,
Women's Centre,
21 Cleveland St, DN1 3EH

DUDLEY

Is the revolutionary paper relevant in the digital age?
Thu 9 Jun, 8pm,
The What Centre,
23 Coventry St, DY8 1EP

DUNDEE

Workers and students—unite and fight
Wed 8 Jun, 7.30pm,
Dundee Voluntary Action,
10 Constitution Rd, DD1 1LL

EDINBURGH

Trump, Sanders and the US working class
Wed 8 Jun, 7.30pm,
Friends Meeting House,
7 Victoria St, EH1 2JL

EXETER

EU—the left case for exit
Thu 9 Jun, 7pm,
Exeter Community Centre,
17 St Davids Hill, EX4 3RG

GLASGOW: SOUTH

Can Jeremy Corbyn survive as Labour leader?
Thu 9 Jun, 7.30pm,
West London Trade Union Club,
33-35 High St,
Acton, W3 6ND

CAMBRIDGE

Thu 9 Jun, 7.30pm,
Signal Box,
Glenalmond Avenue
(off Clarendon Rd),
CB2 8DB

HARLOW

Thu 16 Jun, 7.30pm,
Friends Meeting House,
1 Church Leys,
CM18 6BX

LANCASTER

The Paris Commune 1871—when workers took power

Thu 9 Jun, 7pm,
Friends Meeting House,
Meeting House Lane,
LA1 1TX

LEEDS: CITY CENTRE

Marxism and ecology
Thu 9 Jun, 7pm,
The Swarthmore Education
Centre,
2-7 Woodhouse Square,
LS3 1AD

LEICESTER

The EU—a left case for exit
Wed 8 Jun, 7pm,
Leicester LGBT Centre,
15 Wellington St,
LE1 6HH

LONDON: BRIXTON

Antisemitism, Zionism, Labour and the left
Wed 15 Jun, 7pm,
Vida Walsh Centre,
2b Saltoun Rd (near Effra Rd,
facing Windrush Square),
SW2 1EP

LONDON: EALING

Why are the Tories divided?
Thu 9 Jun, 7.30pm,
West London Trade Union Club,
33-35 High St,
Acton, W3 6ND

LONDON: NEWHAM

Capitalism in crisis—was Marx right?

Wed 8 Jun, 7pm,
Stratford Advice Arcade,
107-109 The Grove (next to
Morrisons car park),
E15 1HP

LONDON: ISLINGTON

Thu 16 Jun, 7pm,
The Old Fire Station,
84 Mayton St,
N7 6QT

LONDON: KINGSTON

Thu 16 Jun, 7pm,
Kingston Quaker
Centre,
Fairfield East,
KT1 2PT

LONDON: HACKNEY

Corbyn and the unions—what's going on?

Thu 16 Jun, 7.30pm,
The Round Chapel,
2 Powerscroft Rd (corner
Lower Clapton Rd),
E5 0PU

LONDON: HARINGEY

What do Marxists say about oppression?

Wed 15 Jun, 7.30pm,
St John Vianney Church Hall,
386 West Green Rd (corner
Vincent Rd),
N15 3QH

LONDON: LEWISHAM

The struggle for freedom in Palestine—an eyewitness account

Wed 8 Jun, 7.30pm,
West Greenwich Community
and Arts Centre,
141 Greenwich High Rd (near
Greenwich main line and DLR
station),
SE10 8JA

LONDON: NEWHAM

Capitalism in crisis—was Marx right?

Wed 8 Jun, 7pm,
Stratford Advice Arcade,
107-109 The Grove (next to
Morrisons car park),
E15 1HP

LONDON: SOUTHWARK

Thu 9 Jun, 7pm,
Camberwell Leisure
Centre (Room 2),
Artichoke Place, SE5 8TS

NOTTINGHAM

Wed 8 Jun, 7.30pm,
International
Community Centre,
61b Mansfield Rd,
NG13 1FN

LONDON: TOWER HAMLETS

Is human nature a barrier to socialism?

Wed 8 Jun, 7pm,
Oxford House,
Derbyshire St (opposite
Bethnal Green Rd Tesco),
E2 6HG

MANCHESTER: CHORLTON

Mental health under capitalism

Wed 8 Jun, 7pm,
Chorlton Central Church
(Meeting Room),
Barlow Moor Rd, M21 8BF

MANCHESTER: CITY CENTRE

Easter 1916—rebellion that rocked the British state

Thu 9 Jun, 7pm,
Friends Meeting House,
6 Mount St, M2 5NS

MANCHESTER: LONGSIGHT AND LENVENSHULME

The Paris Commune 1871—when workers took power

Thu 9 Jun, 7.30pm,
Inspire, 74

Biting 19th century satire of corruption has still got teeth

Disabled actors bring to life a timely new production of Russian novelist Nikolai Gogol's play *The Government Inspector*, says Tomáš Tengely-Evans

DIRECTOR ROXANA Silbert breaks new ground with her take on *The Government Inspector*, a 19th century morality play on corruption.

Written by the Russian novelist Nikolai Gogol in 1836, it is a brutal satire on small-town corruption in Russia under the absolute rule of the Tsar.

When it was published, the Tsarist press went berserk. This time round the Daily Telegraph newspaper has asked whether it is "political correctness gone mad".

With a cast of mainly disabled actors, it uses a mixture of sign language, audio descriptions and captions on stage to make it fully accessible.

Refreshingly, the signing is not an added extra, but an integral part of the play.

The cast brings the satire to life. David Carlyle, as the mayor of the town, fills the theatre with his presence.

As the town learns that an undercover government inspector is coming from the capital St Petersburg, the mayor and his whole entourage go wild.

The Mayor barks orders as he frantically runs around the stage and exchanges snarky comments with the local police.

Penniless

They soon go to the inn and find who they believe is the inspector. In reality, it's Khlestakov (Robin Morrissey), a penniless low grade civil servant and con man who can't believe his luck.

He's so absorbed in his own narcissism, he initially doesn't even realise he's been mistaken for the inspector. Khlestakov proceeds to take bribes from the only too willing officials one by one.

Some of the initial energy dissipates during the production's second half, but the play remains relentless.

Human relationships are built purely around corruption.

Everyone is in everyone else's pocket, everyone is out to deceive one another—there isn't a single sympathetic character.

This makes it both captivating and profoundly alienating. But this tension is sporadically released when the Mayor has brief moments of doubt.

A lone blue spotlight shines down on the Mayor as he confesses to the audience, "I am a sinner".

The dialogue could easily be a *The Thick of It*-style satire on political corruption today.

The Government Inspector

Directed by Roxana Silbert
Touring Liverpool and Sheffield
Go to rampsonthemoon.co.uk

Russian history



"OUT WITH mysticism and fantasy of children's books"—poster by Galina and Olga Chichagova

Children's books—an infantile disorder?

EXHIBITION

A NEW CHILDHOOD—PICTURE BOOKS FROM SOVIET RUSSIA

The House of Illustration,
London N1C 4BH
Until 11 September
Adult tickets £7, children's tickets £4
and family tickets £18
houseofillustration.org.uk

THIS EXHIBITION is a rare opportunity to see children's books from 1920s and 1930s Russia.

With a unique avant garde design and illustrations, they revolutionised picture books in the 20th century.

But the exhibition also shows how society was turned upside down and then torn apart. First,

we see the aftermath of the Russian Revolution and the Civil War and then the repression during Joseph Stalin's counter revolution in the 1930s.

The old Tsarist fairytales of ghosts and spirits were out, young Soviet pioneers were in.

Galina and Olga Chichagova's poster illustrated this transition (pictured, above). "Out with mysticism and fantasy of children's books," it says.

Captivating

In the centre of the poster the Russian revolutionary Vladimir Lenin looks down.

Meanwhile, Pioneers, the Communist youth movement, build socialism.

Many of the illustrations came

from the 1930s, so begin to look like Stalinist propaganda.

But the exhibition includes images untouched by this.

In How the Revolution was Won, Alisa Poret drew captivating images of the October Revolution.

As the Soviet period progresses, the stories become quite comical.

In one story by writer Samuil Marshak and illustrator Vladimir Lebedev, a capitalist eats too much ice cream and freezes to death.

Those interested in this period of illustration should check out this free archive at the University of Princeton (see below).

pudl.princeton.edu/collections/pudl0127

EXHIBITION

EDWARD BARBER

Imperial War Museum London, London SE1 6HZ.
Until 4 September, free
iwm.org.uk

THIS EXHIBITION features more than 40 images by the renowned radical photographer Edward Barber.

He chronicled the mass movement against nuclear weapons in the 1980s.

Photos here include the thousands-strong rally in London's Hyde Park in 1980 against US missiles.

Then there's the Embrace



Anti-war protester

the Base action in 1982.

Some 30,000 women linked hands at Greenham Common military base in Berkshire to protest against nuclear weapons being located at the military site.

It also includes an interesting array of home-made placards and badges.

TOP 5 BOOKS

Bestsellers at Bookmarks, the socialist Bookshop

- | | |
|---|---|
| 1 | A Rebel's Guide to James Connolly
Sean Mitchell |
| 2 | The EU—a left case for exit
Joseph Choonara |
| 3 | 1916—Ireland's Revolutionary Tradition
Kieran Allen |
| 4 | The Rent Trap: How we Fell into It and How we Get Out of It
Samir Jeraj and Rosie Walker (Left Book Club) |
| 5 | William Shakespeare—An Artist for His Times, and for Our Times (Revolutionary Portraits)
Michael Rosen |

Phone 020 7637 1848
bookmarksbookshop.co.uk
Why not visit the shop at 1 Bloomsbury Street, London WC1B 3QE

THE summer of 1966 saw an outburst of militancy from workers in a corrupt union that provided the key test for the left wing rhetoric of the Labour government. It was a test that government failed with long term consequences.

The Labour government of Harold Wilson had been elected in 1964 with a slim majority. Following another election in 1966 Labour got a decent 97-seat majority stemming from more left wing—if somewhat vague—promises.

Wilson had positioned himself on the left of the party. Many workers placed hopes on the Labour government because of this.

But there was pressure from the bosses to curb rising wages. There was also pressure against the limited reforms Labour offered, which were to be replaced with cuts.

In January that year, the bosses' Economist magazine declared, "The only way to achieve an incomes policy in 1966 is going to be by out-facing the trade unions in some big national wages struggle."

The union confrontation was with a surprising one. The National Union of Seamen (NUS) was a company union that had managed to scab on the 1926 general strike and do not much else since.

Outlawed

The Merchant Shipping Act effectively outlawed real union representation at sea. Seafarers could be imprisoned for "desertion" or "disobeying a lawful command" if they went on strike.

This happened to workers in unofficial strikes in 1947 and 1960. Blacklisting was rife.

Seafarers were signed up to a 56-hour week. This was meant as a convenient formality which would enable the ship's master to get seafarers to work at any time in the week.

Many shipowners demanded the full 56 hours were worked.

The old anti-Communist union leadership were gradually being pushed by those who wanted a more militant line.

Some of these got onto the union executive after the unofficial action.

A 40-hour week and a pay rise was demanded.

The bosses offered no increase and a 40-hour week in stages over three years. An official national strike—the first since 1911—began on 16 May.

Crews walked off ship as soon as they reached a British port. By June nearly 20,000 seafarers were on strike. On 5 June thousands marched through London to a rally in Trafalgar Square.

Dockers started blocking goods. In Hull they walked out. But union leaders and the



1966—HOPE BETRAYED BY LABOUR

The 1966 seafarers' strike was a key test for the left wing rhetoric of Harold Wilson's Labour government—a test it failed by attacking workers, argues Simon Baskettter

Communist dockers' leaders argued against spreading the walkouts.

The government declared a State of Emergency, giving it powers to clear ports and cargoes and to use troops to do dock work.

At the same time the Labour government met the shipowners and persuaded them to accept a public enquiry. The union wanted nothing to do with this and said so.

Harold Wilson went on

“Wilson had positioned himself on the left so workers had high hopes”

television. He stressed his duty was to resist the action "because this was a strike against the state".

After Wilson's intervention and the State of Emergency, the NUS leaders still protested that they had no quarrel with the state.

As the government intervened repeatedly on the side of the bosses the left made the mistake of appealing for the government to intervene on the side of the workers instead.

But there were problems for Labour too. The seafarers' strike

was far from the only time a Labour government turned on workers.

A section of the union produced a pamphlet, *Not Wanted on Voyage*, which was a clear defence of the strike. It was written by John Prescott. He had been a ship's steward in the unofficial 1960 strike.

His links to the militants in the union meant he was both more left wing and more coherent than he later became.

After the strike ended the union sponsored him to be the Labour MP for Hull. He later became Tony Blair's deputy prime minister and trousered himself a peerage.

In the House of Commons Wilson denounced the union and attacked the left. He accused a "tightly knit group of politically motivated men" of exercising too much influence on the NUS executive council and attempting national sabotage.

The editor of the Daily Mail newspaper was given all the evidence the government had. He refused to print anything saying it was "exaggeration and half-truths". Only the Observer and the Guardian newspapers cooperated with the campaign against the union militants.

The TUC formally decided against calls for sympathy action. NUS general secretary Bill Hogarth warned that public sympathy for the strike might be wavering following Wilson's "politically motivated men" allegation.

DURING A debate on more emergency powers to break the strike Wilson named names of the members of the Communist Party in the union.

Troops weren't used during the strike and the union leaders saw to it that there was no need. The strike was solid. But three days after all branches had voted for continuation of the strike, and two days after the third of numerous new final offers was rejected, the union called off the strike.

Bert Ramelson, the Communist Party industrial organiser, declared the return to work, "A real victory for trade-union sovereignty."

In truth the right of the union movement were desperate to back the Wilson government. The left union officials went along with them.

The Communists were so desperate not to break from the left bureaucrats that they held back the real prospect of action that could have forced through victory. And in the end, the only people who could get the strikers back to work by selling a shoddy defeat were the witch-hunted Communist militants.

As the government to intervene on the side of the workers instead.

was far from the only time a Labour government turned on workers.

Nor was the summer of 1966 the only time Labour turned on its supporters with cuts. But it was the moment Labour openly admitted that it needed to do both in the national interest and to be trusted in office.

As soon as Labour had come to office the right, the bosses and the bankers had wanted cuts. Lord Cromer, the governor of the Bank of England, demanded "immediate cuts in government expenditure" and particularly to social services.

At first Wilson was shocked by the idea of bankers ordering politicians around. Mostly because he thought manufacturers bosses not bankers should run the economy.

The July issue of the Economist was more honest than Wilson. It saw the opportunity. "There can be a once-for-all straight devaluation of workers' real earnings that will not be recovered when the freeze thaws," it said.

There was a growth in the trade deficit—which the seafarers' strike brought to a head. The bosses launched a run on the pound. The government put up interest rates to 7 percent.

Decisive

According to historian Kenneth Morgan, "The turmoil was the most decisive episode in the Wilson government's life confirming the prime minister's famous opinion that a week is a long time in politics."

International Socialism, the magazine of the forerunners of the Socialist Workers Party, summed up the choice for the Labour government in 1966. "The crisis of the British economy reduced government policy to no more than a declaration of class war," it said.

"The hints of glamorous reforms that brought Labour to office have faded like morning mist in the hot glare of power.

"If Wilson agrees to run British capitalism at a time when its profits can only be secured by open class warfare, when it needs, above everything else, to redistribute the national income from wages to profits, then Wilson must use the truncheon."

The government had promised 2.5 percent growth but the plan was in tatters. The Labour government chose the truncheon and decided the only solution was cuts. Over

£500 million (£6.5 billion in today's money) of cuts were announced in a panic.

Labour launched the Prices and Incomes Policy and gave the Prices and Incomes Board legal powers to control wages. The TUC and the union leaders refused to oppose the move.

Labour increased indirect taxes on the poor by 10 percent and slashed public spending.

Workers' resistance saw a series of strikes in the late 1960s break wage restraint. But union leaders' loyalty to Labour meant they did their best to hold back struggle.

And Labour's attacks demoralised many of its supporters. The turnout in the 1970 election was the lowest for 35 years, and the Labour vote slumped by 5 percent. It was enough for the Tories to get back in.

READ MORE

● **Harold Wilson's legacy**
by Simon Baskettter
bit.ly/1TEA8TM

● **Turning the tide**
The 1966 seafarers' strike
bit.ly/1XO6HSU

● **The Labour Party—A Marxist History**
by Tony Cliff and Donny Gluckstein, £5
bit.ly/1XO6HSU

● **Jeremy Corbyn, Labour and the fight for socialism**
by Charlie Kimber, £3
bit.ly/1XO6HSU

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● **Jeremy Corbyn, Labour and the fight for socialism**
by Charlie Kimber, £3
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Remain campaigners threaten mass job losses if Britain leaves the EU. But the bosses' club won't save us, says Sadie Robinson

TORY CHANCELLOR George Osborne has said leaving the European Union (EU) would lead to recession in Britain. He claimed a Leave vote would provoke an "immediate and profound" economic shock and that 820,000 jobs could go within two years.

Of course, economic forecasts from the Treasury are hardly reliable. And Osborne, whose government has slashed more jobs than this since 2010, doesn't care about unemployment.

But the Tories often use the threat of economic disaster to protect their interests.

Scots were told during the independence referendum that voting to leave Britain would spark economic chaos.

And workers are often told they will lose their jobs if they fight over wages and conditions, as bosses will shut sites.

Punish

It's true that some bosses could try to punish the government if people vote to leave the EU. They could move money elsewhere, or cut back on investment in Britain.

But they are unlikely to do so if it would harm their profits. And if we followed this argument we would never demand anything for fear of upsetting the rich.

Britain could enter recession again this year because of real problems in the economy, such as a reliance on debt and credit. This has nothing to do with the EU.

The so-called PIGS—Portugal, Ireland, Greece and Spain—are all in the EU and have all experienced deep recessions.

Greece's GDP has dropped by a quarter since the 2007-08 financial crash. Unemployment stands at around 24 percent—rising to 50 percent for young people.



Would leaving the EU really cause a recession?

READ MORE

The EU—a left case for exit

A Socialist Worker pamphlet by Joseph Choonara. Cover price £3 or ten copies for £20

Phone 020 7840 5600 to place your order



Far from the EU easing the pain, it has contributed to it—and then demanded more.

Bailouts brokered by European institutions and the International Monetary Fund demanded savage cuts to repay bankers' loans.

Workers in Greece have been repeatedly told that if they just swallow the next austerity package, the economy will improve.

The level of struggle in Britain has been nowhere near what is needed to stop the Tory onslaught. But they aren't as strong as they may appear. Most of Britain's ruling class backs EU membership, but our rulers are divided over it. We should exploit those divisions.

The bosses and the Tories want us to pay for the crisis. Breaking up the EU would weaken them—let's grab the opportunity.

Osborne claims that what's good for the bosses is good for workers

Reject Jeremy Hunt's toxic contract

by TOMÁS TENGELY-EVANS

THE BRITISH Medical Association's (BMA) junior doctors' committee was due to meet on Friday after details of their new contract were released.

The BMA is holding a "referendum" from 17 June to 1 July on a deal it cobbled together with Tory health secretary Jeremy Hunt.

Hunt was forced to make changes after imposing the dangerous new contract in February.

That was a sign of the pressure junior doctors had put on him—pressure built through eight solid strikes.

Reject

Junior doctors have the power to force Hunt to dump the toxic contract. The junior doctors' committee should recommend that BMA members reject the deal.

The contract's terms and conditions confirm that although Hunt has made some concessions, this deal



STRIKING JUNIOR doctors on their "full walkout" last month

PICTURE: CHRIS JAMES

is not acceptable.

Hunt's aim is to break the junior doctors' momentum, slash other health workers' unsocial hours pay and push through more privatisation.

He claims the new contract is essential to bring in "seven day working" in

the NHS to improve patient safety.

In reality the NHS already provides emergency services 24/7 and health workers work long hours, including nights and weekends.

Hunt wanted to make Saturday a regular work day

and scrap financial penalties on bosses who overwork doctors.

This deal makes Saturdays and Sundays ordinary working days and reduces extra night shift pay from 50 percent to 37 percent.

It replaces penalties for

overworking doctors with a weaker "guardian role".

Junior doctors working less than one weekend in eight would only be paid normal pay rates and those working up to one in two will receive between 3 and 10 percent.

The Tories have said that it reduces the cost of weekend working by one third.

Safety

Reducing the proportion of pay that junior doctors receive from unsocial hours will not discourage them from working large amounts of unsocial hours and it certainly won't protect patient safety.

While many junior doctors are frustrated with the deal, no one is yet organising this anger.

If the junior doctors' committee backs or remains neutral on it, left wingers on the committee should still lead a campaign of rejection.

Escalating strikes can still beat back Jeremy Hunt's attacks.

Back student bursary demo

HEALTH CARE students fighting to save their bursaries were set to march through central London this Saturday.

Jenny Lew is part of the Bursary or Bust campaign at London South Bank University.

"Scraping the NHS bursary won't just mean fewer workers," she said. "It will mean fewer women, BME groups and working class people will be able to study."

"Part of being a health worker is empathy with your patients—how can you do that if the workforce doesn't reflect the people we're caring for?"

The march can be a focus for anger against Tory austerity.

March—Sat 4 June, 1pm, St Thomas' Hospital, London, SE1 7EH. Details at bit.ly/1OrizUP

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World in turmoil and workers' fight fuel interest in socialism

Hundreds have been debating the way forward for the left at a series of rallies organised by the Socialist Workers Party (SWP). Alistair Farrow listened to the debate in Birmingham

WORKING CLASS power has forced its way onto the centre stage as strikes burst out in France in recent weeks (see pages 4&5).

In Britain the junior doctors' strike, the universities walkout last week and the prospect of teachers striking in the summer highlight the class divisions in society.

But at the same time governments ruthlessly implement austerity, and racist and even Nazi forces are growing in parts of Europe.

This was the context for a meeting in Birmingham last Thursday which debated if workers have the power to change society.

Around 120 Labour Party members, revolutionary socialists and trade unionists came from across the West Midlands.

It was part of a series of "Is Socialism Possible?" meetings organised by the Socialist Workers Party (SWP).

Meetings of over 100 in Manchester and Sheffield took place earlier in the month and two meetings in London are set to take place next week.

Transform

Before the meeting started, Labour Party members John and Elliot spoke to Socialist Worker about why they had come. "We're here to figure out the answer to the question on the poster", said Elliot.

Speakers from the platform argued that the working class has power.

Charlie Kimber, editor of Socialist Worker, urged the crowd to look towards France.

Some 36 hours before the meeting the CGT union leader had sent a letter to every French newspaper demanding it was published. Only the left wing L'Humanite newspaper ran it.

The era of Jeremy Corbyn

LABOUR MEMBERS who attended the meeting all supported Jeremy Corbyn.

But they had different analyses about his chances for delivering on the hopes people have for his leadership.

"I joined the Labour party because of Jeremy Corbyn", said John.

"I thought there was a real chance for a social movement. I hope the wave of support that got him in doesn't wear off."

This follows claims by shadow



Labour leader Jeremy Corbyn



AROUND 120 people from across the West Midlands came to the Birmingham rally

Charlie said, "This morning, only one newspaper appeared in France, L'Humanite. All the rest the printers stopped producing."

UCU union members were out on strike on the day of the meeting. Elio, a university worker, argued that ordinary people in Britain have the collective power to fight back and win.

He said, "The latest government plan for education means the end of the profession as we know it and we desperately need to fight it."

Megan Parsons, a junior doctor, argued that their strikes have transformed the way the junior doctors see the world and themselves.

She said, "One year ago I don't think anyone thought we'd see junior doctors' strikes or that doctors would be outside parliament chanting, 'Tories out!'"

After the meeting, PCS union member Shazia Rock told Socialist Worker, "The bankers that put the country into the position it's in need

to be held to account.

"We've had people in my area that have taken their own life due to the financial attacks. The Tory government has got a lot to answer for."

A Labour Party member was one of those who joined the SWP after the meeting. "Everything the SWP does, organising demos, going to picket lines, holding meetings makes a huge difference", she said.

"I thought it was time I pinned my colours to the mast."

Which side are EU on?

IF JEREMY Corbyn put forward the left wing case for leaving the European Union (EU), it would undermine the Brexit campaign's gutter racism.

It would boost the likelihood of Lexit becoming the dominant force calling for leaving the EU.

Labour Party member Rob argued that the party leadership should take a more principled position. "If the Labour Party had a position to Leave then I think they would garner a lot of support", he said.

However, he added, "If David Cameron's toppled if we vote Leave, then we'll be left with Boris."

But Anona argued that a strong Lexit campaign would weaken the Tory right.

"It would help to mobilise the left and we might actually be in a position to push the Tory government out," she said.

The SWP's Judith Orr said, "If Cameron loses the EU referendum he won't last 30 seconds.

"We need to make the most of these opportunities."

Socialists need to fight for a left wing exit.

How do we beat our rulers?

PEOPLE DEBATED what kind of change is possible and how it can be won.

One new SWP member said, "We have to work with people who support Jeremy Corbyn and pull them to the left."

"The more people get involved in the revolutionary party, the bigger difference it can make."

Labour member John argued that revolutionary socialism is not realistic. He added that "the government seem to be ignoring protests more and more."

But Anona said, "By joining protests and doing that kind of activity we can push parliament to actually do things."

Rob disagreed, "We need all countries to rise up against capitalism. They can't do it alone."

Organisations that argue for revolutionary politics are essential to win socialism.

The Egyptian revolution provides a stark example of the need for a revolutionary organisation, argued the SWP's Judith Orr.

The Egyptian Revolutionary Socialists' small size meant their influence was limited. "The regime swept back and crushed the revolutionary movement", she said.

"The state is built for one thing—to defend the wealth of the tiny minority."

SWP rallies

Is socialism possible?

LONDON: NORTH & NORTH EAST

Thu 9 Jun, 7pm,
Kurdish Community Centre,
11 Portland Gardens,
Haringey, N4 1HU

LONDON: SOUTH

Wed 8 Jun, 6.30pm,
Karibu Centre,
7 Gresham Rd,
Brixton,
SW9 7PH

IN BRIEF

Tories in solidarity with GTR rail bosses

THE TORIES are helping out train bosses in south east England as they confront unions and drive through changes that will be felt across Britain's railways.

Govia Thameslink Railway (GTR) bosses have docked extra pay from striking train guards and victimised strikers. They are using the courts to block driver strikes.

The RMT and Aslef unions are resisting the extension of driver-only operation on Southern Railway and Gatwick Express—both part of GTR.

Facing calls to remove the franchise from GTR, the government changed the rules to allow the firm to increase train cancellations by a third.

Binworkers battle on in South Ayrshire

REFUSE WORKERS in South Ayrshire are continuing a series of half-hour strikes over bosses at the Tory-run council imposing new shift patterns on them.

The Unite union members are striking against new shifts that now see bin collections up to 10pm.

The short strikes are well-supported and are disrupting the service.

Three to one vote for strike to take off

THOMAS COOK Airlines cabin crew have voted by 74 percent to strike over health and safety concerns and changes to rest breaks.

Their union Unite was in talks with bosses as Socialist Worker went to press.

The Unite members work on flights to major tourist destinations from ten airports.

Chance for action to flow in North Sea

STRIKES ON North Sea oil platforms are possible after talks over pay, proposed cuts and changes to working conditions by the Wood Group broke down.

Wood Group is proposing pay cuts of up to 30 percent.

Unite says it will now prepare to ballot several hundred members working for Wood Group.

Addison Lee sacks drivers after demo

AT LEAST five drivers working for taxi firm Addison Lee have been made redundant after a GMB union demonstration against the company's terms and conditions.

According to the union, within an hour of the protest ending, Addison Lee terminated the contracts of three GMB group reps without explanation.

The GMB needs to take urgent action against this blatant attack.

CINEMA WORKERS



WORKERS AT the Rio Cinema in Hackney, east London, struck on Wednesday of last week against new contracts that will mean redundancies and less pay. Sofie Mason, an official of the strikers' Bectu union,

said, "The new contracts begin on 1 June. Thirty out of 33 staff will not sign them. We need the support of local trade unions and community organisations to win this."

PICTURE: SASHA SIMIC

EDUCATION

Lecturers' conference meets at crucial time

by SADIE ROBINSON

UCU LECTURERS' union members will meet for the union's annual congress in Liverpool this week amid a Tory assault on education.

The higher education white paper aims to let the market rip through universities while government area reviews threaten further education colleges with merger or closure.

Casualisation of contracts is a big issue in both sectors.

And attacks on pay and conditions are linked to a Tory agenda of increasing

privatisation in the sector.

Carlo Morelli is assistant secretary of the UCU at Dundee university and a member of the union's national executive committee.

He told Socialist Worker, "The higher education pay dispute (see page 7) will be a big issue at the conference.

"There will be debates over escalating the action, holding a marking boycott in the autumn and coordinating action with other unions."

A motion calls on the union to try to coordinate ballots in colleges over the cuts resulting from the area reviews.

There will also be a big debate over the union's campaign over the white paper.

The Convention for Higher Education has produced an alternative white paper.

Carlo said UCU needed to put itself "at the heart of the movement" against the white paper.

He also stressed that the union needs to fight the Prevent strategy, which targets Muslims as potential terrorists.

And delegates should back a motion calling on the union to reaffirm its policies on justice for Palestine.

SCHOOLS BALLOT

NUT UNION members across England are balloting for strikes over the impact of the government's education white paper and funding cuts.

The ballot ends on 22 June. Groups of teachers have held "ballot parties" to bring teachers together and collectively vote for action.

Teachers began preparing for the ballot following the NUT conference. In Ealing, west London, there have been meetings held or arranged in 43 of its 87 schools.

The Tories were forced to withdraw a plan to force every school in England to become an academy by 2022.

This has led to some confusion. NUT groups urgently need to organise to visit schools without reps to discuss the ballot.

Tory plans to slash funding and push more schools to become academies will hit workers—and harm education. A big vote for strikes can play a key role in pushing back the attacks.

FIGHTING ACADEMIES



AROUND 100 parents protested against academies

No clickety-clack shoes here

A STRONG protest by parents at George Tomlinson Primary School took place in Leytonstone, east London, on Friday of last week. The local authority has appointed an interim head from Lime Academy Trust.

Within days this head declared the school in crisis, despite Ofsted having rated it "Good with outstanding

features". Children have come home saying, "There are lots of people with clickety-clack shoes in school" and, "The new teachers don't like us".

Parents suspect a plan to convert the school to an academy. Around 100 protested outside school after drop-off and then petitioned at Leytonstone station.

Ben Morris

PCS UNION CONFERENCE

Brilliant local action is no substitute for national fight

by CANDY UDWIN, PCS national executive committee (pc)

THERE WERE two sides to the story at this year's PCS conference.

On the one hand the National Museum of Wales strikers on their fifth week of an all-out strike inspired conference with a feeling of excitement about the possibility of fighting back.

If they were to win following the success at the National Gallery last year it would mean local PCS disputes have put all-out strikes back on the map. The union can confidently consider rolling out all-out strike as the best way to win.

In stark contrast, the PCS leadership opposed national strikes against compulsory redundancies.

It pushed through a recommendation to accept a pay deal in DWP despite anger

against it. Many DWP activists will continue to campaign for a no vote in the ballot.

The challenge of how to move from local resistance to the national action needed to take on the government was not seriously discussed.

The challenge for PCS is not just to make sure local action is successful, but to use the lessons from these to move to national action.

■ The Tories are pushing ahead with plans to close down Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS) offices and slash hundreds of jobs.

A move to close the Sheffield BIS office was confirmed on Thursday of last week.

The announcement came as PCS union members struck against the plans, with as many as 100 strikers joining picket lines.

STEEL

Reject pensions blackmail

THE GOVERNMENT wants to cut Tata steel workers' pensions to make the firm's remaining assets in Britain easier to sell. This would rob workers of pensions they've already paid for—and set a dangerous precedent.

The British Steel Pension Scheme (BSPS) has a £700 million deficit. Firms say they might snap up Tata's steel works on the cheap, but not at a cost of bailing out the pension fund.

The Tories first looked at taking BSPS into the state-backed PPF pension scheme.

But this would come with a cut of more than ten percent for many workers.

Now business secretary Sajid Javid proposes a law change so BSPS pensions can rise in line with the CPI inflation rate not the RPI rate. CPI is typically around 1 percentage point lower.

Workers would lose about £2.5 billion.

The fear of job losses must not be used as cover for, as steel unions put it in a joint statement, "employers dodging their pensions responsibilities".

COUNCILS

Defend the Durham TAs

TEACHING assistants (TAs) and the wider trade union movement in County Durham are coming together to resist a major attack on pay voted through by the Labour-dominated council.

County Durham trades council has organised a solidarity meeting to help build a campaign to defend 2,700 TAs from a savage pay cut of up to 23 percent.

The "savings" are equivalent to the wages of just 28 senior staff at the council.

Councillors plan to sack every TA and rehire them on new contracts from January.

The workers' union, Unison, has still not balloted workers for action. Trade unionists were furious that a union official last week was actively trying to sabotage the solidarity meeting.

Activists should redouble their efforts to build for the

biggest possible turnout at the solidarity event.

● Solidarity event hosted by Durham trades council, Thursday 9 June, 7pm, Durham Miners Association, Flass Street, DH1 4BE.

■ THE GMB union has forced Birmingham City Council to back off from slashing council workers' sick pay.

The Labour-run council's plans would have seen council and school support workers lose pay for the first three days of sickness.

Christine Mooney, the GMB Birmingham education branch secretary, told Socialist Worker, "It's a big victory. We started balloting our members and then the council backed down."

GMB members have shown that it's possible to successfully resist council bosses' attacks.

LGBT+

Support for refugees on Birmingham Pride

by TOMÁŠ TENGELY-EVANS

THOUSANDS OF people marched through Birmingham on the LGBT+ Pride march last Saturday.

A lively bloc of over 300 trade unionists and campaigners led the march despite the organisers' best efforts to keep politics out of Pride.

To chants of, "LGBT fight against austerity" and, "Refugees are welcome here" the crowd snaked through Birmingham.

The bloc was led by the Bursary or Bust campaign, which is fighting the Tories' plans to scrap NHS students' bursaries (see page 16).

LGBT+ campaigners used the march to build support for refugees and the Pink Bus to Calais campaign.

They are raising funds for a pink bus to go on a solidarity trip to Calais.

Richard from Nottingham collected for the campaign on the march. He said, "We still live in a homophobic society. LGBT+ people are still a subjugated group like refugees.

"There are also LGBT+ refugees in Calais, who will face additional discrimination."

Many LGBT+ asylum seekers are forced to flee homophobic laws that were brought in by the old colonial powers in the 19th century.

Once they come to Britain they face more discrimination



CAMPAIGNERS protested in central London last week against plans for the Red Arrows to do a fly by at London Pride

PICTURE: SOCIALIST WORKER

and have to "prove" their sexuality.

Jane Namuddu is an asylum seeker from Uganda and part of the Movement for Justice.

"When I was detained in Yarl's Wood, I had to fight for my justice," she said. "Now we have to fight for those

who are still inside."

At the end of the march campaigners held a small rally and went to Birmingham LGBT Centre instead of the official ticketed event.

Nicola Field from LGBT+ Against Islamophobia said, "Pride was led by NHS students, refugee

campaigners and workers from Birmingham.

"We've stood up to the banks and corporations who try to dominate our movement. Now we want to spread what we've done today with our contingent across the country."

●More at bit.ly/1PcBDMf

HOUSING

Butterfields residents in Walthamstow prepare to resist new eviction notices

by ALISTAIR FARROW

FOUR HOUSEHOLDS living on the Butterfields Estate in Walthamstow, north London have been issued with eviction notices.

A residents' meeting last Wednesday decided to resist the evictions.

Nicole Holgate, secretary of the Butterfields Won't Budge campaign, is one of those issued with a notice.

She thinks that the leaders of the campaign have been targeted by Butterfields E17 Ltd, which owns the homes.

Nicole said, "They've targeted the chair of the tenants' association.

FOOD WORKERS

Two strikes for 2 Sisters

WORKERS AT factories owned by food manufacturer 2 Sisters in Sheffield and Newport in South Wales were set to strike over pay this week.

Members of the Bfawu union at Newport's RF Brookes and Sheffield's Pennine plants are fighting plans to cut overtime and shift allowances.

Around half of the 800 workers at RF Brookes were set to start a two-day walkout

on Thursday this week.

And in a separate but related dispute, workers at Pennine, which makes ready meals for Marks & Spencer, were set to strike on Sunday and Monday.

It will follow a previous 48-hour walkout and a protest outside Marks & Spencer in Sheffield last week. Unite union members at the 2 Sisters Pizza Factory in Nottingham have also begun a strike ballot.

EGYPT SOLIDARITY

Protest demands freedom for campaigners in Egypt

by CHARLIE KIMBER

STUDENTS, academics, trade unionists and campaigners from Amnesty International and Egypt Solidarity Initiative protested on Friday of last week against state violence in Egypt.

They demanded the truth about the murder of Giulio Regeni and justice for Egypt's disappeared.

Meanwhile 47 of the 101 Egyptian activists recently sentenced to five years in jail have had their custodial sentences quashed.

This is clear evidence that organised resistance and solidarity have an effect.

However, the appeal did not remove the very large fines imposed on them and they are likely to spend several months in jail because they cannot afford to pay.

The 47 affected are those unjustly sentenced after protests against the Western-backed Egyptian regime selling the Tiran and Sanafir islands to Saudi Arabia.

The jailings were met by a



Protesting in London

PICTURE: EGYPT SOLIDARITY INITIATIVE

wave of outrage in Egypt and expressions of international solidarity with the prisoners.

A support statement in Britain won widespread backing from union leaders, campaigners, academics and MPs.

Now there needs to be more protests to free the other 54 sentenced to five years in jail, the 50 others sentenced to two years, and all of Egypt's prisoners.

●Sign the statement at egyptsolidarityinitiative.org/haithamstatement

More online at bit.ly/1WtBqqm

ANTI-FASCISM

Nazis' bank holiday weekend washout

by SADIE ROBINSON

IT WAS a bad weekend for the Nazis last Saturday.

The Nazi Britain First group was humiliated for a second week running in Leicester.

Nazis were forced to abandon a stall in the city centre on 21 May after local people gathered to oppose them.

Britain First leader Paul Golding said, "We came back to disprove media statements that said we were driven out."

But an even bigger crowd gathered to oppose them last Saturday, chanting,

"Refugees are welcome here".

People held an impromptu victory parade once the Nazis had been escorted away by police.

Nazis from the South East Infidels were humiliated in Dover on the same day.

Around 70 anti-fascists turned out to oppose just 25 Nazis.

Wigan

National Front Nazis failed to show up to a planned protest in Wigan.

A crowd of anti-racists joined a rally called by Wigan Together to celebrate.

Nazis from National Action were arrested in

York after unfurling an anti-refugee banner with a picture of Adolf Hitler on it.

Passers-by cheered as the Nazis were taken away.

■ ROTHERHAM UNITE Against Fascism plans to demonstrate this Saturday against Nazi group Pegida.

Pegida is threatening to protest in Rotherham to try and use a child sexual exploitation scandal in the town to whip up racism.

The counter-protest will assemble at 10.30am in All Saints Square in Rotherham town centre.

Go to Rotherham Unite Against Fascism on Facebook for more details.

"He's been targeted before. They've been round his house before."

Two other houses have also been targeted, seemingly at random, Nicole told Socialist Worker.

Less than a month ago tenants were celebrating victory.

Butterfields E17 had backed down after serving eviction notices to tenants.

Refused

People refused to leave and the campaign pressured the company to begin negotiations with social landlord Dolphin Living to buy the homes.

"We understood that

negotiations were going on," said Nicole.

"We were told that we would be informed if anything changed so we were just waiting."

But the campaign is not backing down.

At the emergency meeting on Wednesday residents and their supporters planned the next steps in their campaign to fight the landlords.

Nicole said, "We need to start the pressure all over again and prove to the company that we're not worth the trouble."

"We're not going anywhere".

●Sign the petition at bit.ly/25vQdmY

DON'T BAIL OUT WARRING TORIES

With deep divisions in the Tory party over Europe, the left must go on the offensive against Cameron's weakened government instead of arguing for Remain, writes Tomáš Tengely-Evans

TORY MPs are gunning for David Cameron—and ready to depose the prime minister after the European Union (EU) referendum.

Mounting divisions within the Tory party have seen two right wing MPs demand his resignation and a general election in the autumn.

Tory MP Nadine Dorries said Cameron was "toast" if people backed leaving the EU. She has called for a vote of no confidence in Cameron.

Another, Andrew Bridgen, said Cameron was "finished" as prime minister—no matter what the referendum result is—as he is "at odds with half of the Parliamentary Party".

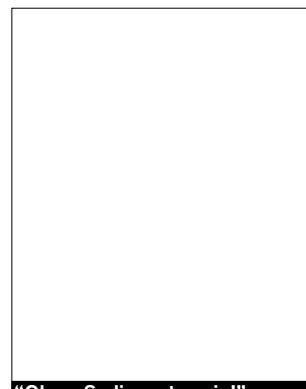
One Tory minister predicted "a bloodbath" when the referendum is over and said that Tory politicians either had to "kill or be killed".

This is the left's chance to topple the Tories and push back against their austerity and racism.

Bigots such as Dorries and Bridgen are heading up the coup attempts and Dorries wants to install former London mayor Boris Johnson.

But Cameron is not some "moderate" Tory embattled by right wingers.

He has pushed through brutal cuts and a racist



referendum—which Labour has not recovered from.

That's why it was wrong for Sadiq Khan, London's new Labour mayor, to campaign with Cameron for Remain.

Cameron had smeared Khan in an Islamophobic election campaign just weeks before. Yet they both joined forces in the "national interest"—they mean the bosses' interests.

Having promised to be the most pro-business mayor of London ever, Khan is siding with the City of London who want to remain in the EU bosses' club.

But it's not just the Labour right playing a dangerous game. While not working with the Tory leadership, the Labour left's support for the EU is Cameron's only hope of survival.

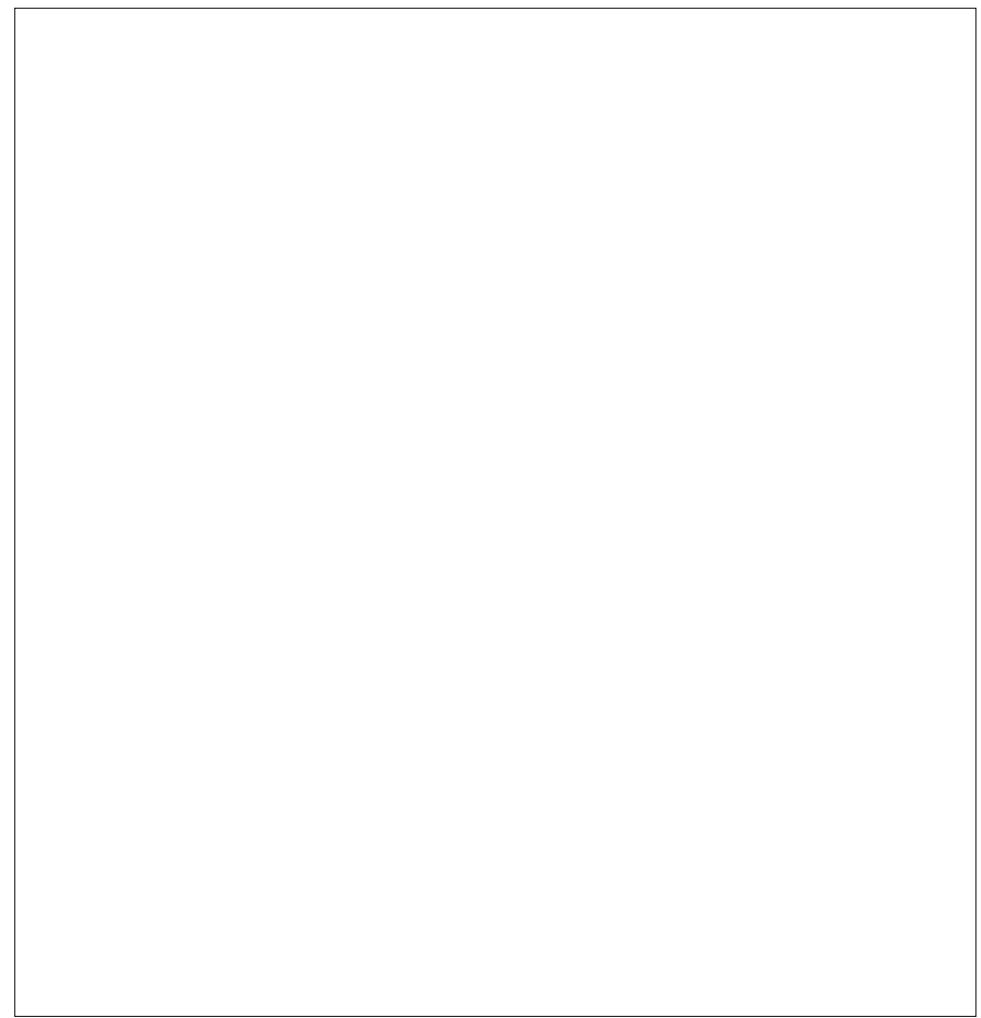
He hopes that Jeremy Corbyn, who until recently opposed the EU, can help Remain win.

The Tories are in open civil war. The left should go on the attack so it can shift politics leftwards after the referendum. That means building resistance and voting Leave.

It's not just the Labour right playing a dangerous game

On other pages...

Would leaving the EU really cause a recession >>Page 15



Why vote Leave in the European Union referendum?

1 "Freedom of movement" myth
If you are a refugee trying to cross the Mediterranean or trapped in Calais, you have no "freedom of movement".

The EU is built on excluding people from outside of Europe—with patrol boats and razorwire fences if necessary. Britain's rulers rely on EU border controls to keep Calais in lockdown.

Leaving would blow a hole in Fortress Europe—and weaken the EU rulers responsible for the deaths of refugees.

2 Austerity for the masses
The EU's brutal imposition of austerity on Greece shows its true nature—a bosses' club that protects our rulers' interests.

It didn't just impose austerity, but full-blown free market shock therapy of privatisations and a bonfire of workers' rights.

Leaving the EU would weaken the EU's rulers who are imposing austerity on the working class across Europe—and it would also weaken the Tory government in Britain.

3 More money for the bosses
The Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP) trade deal would prise open public services to multinationals.

The aim is to create a single trading block that can compete with the US and EU's rising competitor China. TTIP will block renationalisation and allow big firms to sue governments.

It's not enough to talk of pressuring the EU to moderate TTIP—a left exit can save public services.

No racism in referendum

AROUND 200 people joined a Refugees Welcome Here—Racism out of the Referendum meeting in London last week.

It was organised by Stand Up to Racism against the racist scapegoating of both the official Remain and Leave EU referendum campaigns.

The Tories have been forced to retreat partially

over child refugees. Lord Dubs' amendment to the Immigration Act lets more unaccompanied refugee children into Britain.

Dubs told the meeting, "Solidarity is what we need when facing our enemies, more solidarity will help us to keep fighting."

Read longer article at bit.ly/1OZSrpa